

Servant leadership research paper sample

[Business](#), [Company](#)



Abstract

This paper focuses upon servant leadership and its relevance to a real estate investment company and a career in that field. Servant leadership may be an old concept, but it was officially coined in 1970's and has ever since grown in popularity. Servant leaders are understanding and cooperative; thus, they are popular amongst most subordinates. As servant leadership does not focus upon favoritism by managers or team leaders, it allows for fair treatment of all employees. However, the paper mentions that servant leadership is not the only suitable form of leadership, but it would only prove to be fruitful if practiced correctly.

There has been a long-standing debate about whether leaders are born or made. There are various personality types and in my opinion certain personality types make better leaders than others. It cannot be argued that there is a natural charisma in some individual's that draws the attention of those who look up to him. The ability of an individual to adjust to the surrounding environment may also be considered as a vital indicator of a potential leader. A constant behavior is the least of all traits that a leader must possess. In the professional world today, it has become essential for leaders and managers to adapt to the changing environment. Like many other forms of leadership, servant leadership is also one form. As the name servant suggests, in this type of leadership the leader is willing to serve his subordinates (Greenleaf). In other words, the leaders basic criteria are first to do not feel alienated. In a constantly evolving and competitive business environment, the need for a servant leader is even more critical.

The concept of servant leadership is not new, and there are evidences to

suggest the existence of this leadership style as long ago as 570 BCE. In older times, it was said that if the presence of a leader is not felt then servant leadership is in practice. However, the term servant leadership is relatively newer when Robert K. Greenleaf officially coined this term in 1970. The basic idea behind not feeling the presence of a leader is similar to what Greenleaf termed servant leadership. Earlier, servant leadership has also been attributable to the Christian religion, where the Gospel suggests the presence of this kind of a leadership philosophy adopted by Jesus Christ. Thus, it is safe to assume that even before leadership styles were categorized in the business world people did carry certain personality traits. Servant leadership may be viewed as a leadership philosophy along with a leadership style. The leader who possesses this characteristic often prioritizes other's needs before his own. It is essential for a servant leader to be able to serve his subordinates, as and when required. As mentioned earlier, the highly competitive environment requires employees and team members to be highly motivated and passionate towards their work. Organizations that are unable to keep their employees often motivated experience high levels of employee turnover. In order to overcome the dilemma of high employee turnover adaptation of servant leadership is a possible solution. It is a characteristic of servant leadership that the leader helps his team members or subordinates to learn and grow. In other words, the leader tries to unleash the potential within individuals through his leadership style. Certain common characteristics of servant leadership include; ability to listen, empathizes, heal, create awareness, persuade, conceptualize, foresightedness, stewardship, commitment to growth of

people, and community building. It must be clearly understood that the ten characteristics mentioned are by no means exhaustive, and there may be variances depending upon personality types and individuals. Unlike other leadership styles, servant leadership cannot be categorized under any specific category because it is neither authoritative nor democratic; however, most of its traits are somewhat similar to the participative leadership style. As the leader wants to unleash the potential of his / her subordinates the servant leader often delegate responsibility. Adding on, it is common for servant leaders to indulge in participative decision making as this contributes positively towards motivational levels. Unlike other forms of leadership, servant leadership thinks about the hierarchical relationship between employees and subordinates rather than just employee behavior. Servant leadership provides several benefits, but is only found in inverted pyramid organizations. It is a matter of concern, that if servant leadership has so many benefits then why people are not adopting this style. Adam Grants is an organizational psychologist who is working towards understanding the mindset of those leading rather than those being led. According to a study by Grant, servant leaders are not only appreciated by their subordinates, but they also feel good about themselves and are more productive at the end of the day (HBS Knowledge, 2013). Increased productivity is attributable to the higher levels of motivation that results in employees performing better and much more efficiently. Furthermore, any ideas the servant leader may have about improving performance, he/she may immediately transmit this information to his/her subordinates. Moving on, servant leaders do not have favorites and this is one of the greatest

reasons for their popularity at the workplace. Consequently, no information is kept from employees, and all employees receive the same information; thus, they are all able to benefit in their own way and time is also saved. However, Grant suggests the downside of this method of leader's spoon feeding employees. It makes certain workers habitual of receiving information from their leaders, and this contributes towards their inefficient behavior and attitude at the workplace. Leaders should become conscientious when adopting the servant leadership style and sieve out those employees who become habitual takers of information (HBS Knowledge, 2013).

As competition increases in the business world, it will become vital for organizations to retain the best talent otherwise it would be lost to competing firms. Some organizations are already struggling to keep the best workers and have to provide monetary, as well as non-monetary benefits. Servant leadership may not be of much use in isolation, but may only work in coordination with other benefits and motivators. As a real estate investment employer servant leadership would help in achieving targets along with subordinates. The real estate investment industries are in the growth phase, and as people make more money they need greater options to invest their savings and earn a return. The salespeople at a real estate investment organization need to be motivated in order to achieve the desired target otherwise business profits would suffer. Adding on, businesses need to maintain a person-organization fit. Real estate agents need to ensure that the salespeople hired share common beliefs as the company as a whole. If the salespeople do not agree with company values, they may become a cost for the firm in the long run. Servant leadership ensures that these values are

clearly understood amongst potential hires and existing employees. In other words, servant leadership may help create the image of the firm in the market and amongst potential employees. Therefore, person-organization fit would become possible through servant leadership (Jaramillo & Grisaffe et al., 2010).

Servant leadership is a popular form of leadership amongst employees. Therefore, it is essential to incorporate some form of servant leadership into my real estate investment career. It would be in my benefit to adopt this form of leadership behavior because I would be able to get the work done. Furthermore, this would help achieve business targets and contribute towards my career growth. Beginning a company is not an easy task, and it is vital to gain the trust of fellow workers so that they contribute positively towards the business, and the business can survive at that stage and grow in the future. Investment is a sensitive industry, and investors require complete information and satisfaction before going ahead with the investment. If salespeople are not well-versed with the products they are offering they may lose sales to competitive firms; therefore, servant leadership would give leverage to employees in dealing with customers. Leaders or managers who adopt a servant leadership philosophy provide employees with complete details about the business and very little is kept confidential. The investment industry has its ups and downs and is constantly fluctuating. If the manager holds the employees solely responsible for declining revenue without taking into consideration external factors then the manager may upset their workers and experience high turnover. Therefore, if servant leadership style is adopted I may be able to empathize with workers and encourage them to

explore newer markets and keep trying harder to achieve the desired result. Real estate investment is highly dependent upon the past, present, and future conditions of the economy. Foresightedness may help me to connect the past, present and future and, as a result, devise a plan that would benefit the employees. As salespeople deal with the external environment directly, they would be involved in the decision-making process and servant leadership may contribute towards this behavior. Moreover, if I as a manager or leader adopt a strategy of providing unbiased and complete information it would have a positive impact upon employees. Employees often enact behavior of their superiors and as a salesperson may provide complete information to customers, and that would help them get trained with this leadership style and would later prove as helpful in their managerial position.

Servant leadership is characteristic of a cooperative and understanding leadership style that perfectly fits today's business environment. However, servant leadership alone can provide no great benefit and the leader should be able to determine what kind of style to adopt at what time. An effective leader is one who can accurately assess the situation at hand and deal with it accordingly. However, for a real estate Investment Company there may be other traits and qualifications required for the effective and smooth running. Man-power must never be underestimated; thus, it is critical to assess the leadership styles adopted. Without employees, no industry of the service sector can function, so organizations need to provide all the incentives to their employees in order to keep them motivated and passionate. If the employees provide half information because of lack of knowledge about the

company it would reflect negatively upon the firm's image; therefore, servant leadership is of utmost importance in the real estate investment agency. Moreover, in order to increase the popularity amongst employees and get them to work it is important to show cooperation and understanding which would be achievable through servant leadership style.

References

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